

the best compromise that could be effected. Meanwhile the sense of responsibility for results was lost. In the largest cities, where the evils of inefficiency have been most severely felt, the present tendency is to lodge with the mayor the power to appoint, or at least nominate all the executive officers of the city. It is doubtful whether a high degree of efficient administration can so well be obtained in any other way. If this power, so lodged with the mayor, is made a part of a consistent system by which the responsibility goes with the power with equal step, the dangers to the city resulting from the system are really less than those which flow from other methods. Power without responsibility is always dangerous; but power, with responsibility to a constituency which can readily call it to account, is not dangerous. It is the first requisite to efficient administration. A city is not so much a little state as it is a great corporation. So long as we can look to our provincial and federal governments to protect us in our liberties as citizens, we need have no fear in forming our city governments for the purpose of doing efficiently the work that a city government ought to do. The system prevailing in Brooklyn, N. Y., for joining responsibility with power, seems as nearly ideal as any that we have heard of. The mayor is elected for a term of two years, and takes office on the first of January. The great administrative departments of the city are carried on for him, for one month, by the appointees of his predecessor. On the 1st of February it becomes the duty of the mayor to appoint or confirm, without confirmation by the common council, all the heads of executive departments. These appointments are made or ratified for a term of two years, so that each incoming mayor enjoys the opportunity of making an administration in harmony with himself. Under these conditions, an administration is formed for which the mayor not only should be willing to be responsible, but for which he must be responsible. It is a fact worthy of note, that few heads of departments have changed with change of mayor. In practice, the people of Brooklyn understand that for all administrative failure, in any part of the city government, the mayor is finally responsible. Complaint, naturally, is made first to the head of a department. If the complaint involves the head of a department himself, it is made to the mayor. If the mayor corrects the evil, that, of course, is the end of it. If he does not, he makes himself directly responsible for it. When a new mayor is to be elected, canvass is conducted admittedly upon the theory that the outgoing mayor, so far as the people are concerned, is responsible for all the acts of his administration. Naturally this makes a long line for the mayor to defend, and conspicuous failure is pretty certain to receive an emphatic verdict. There may, indeed, be poor administration under this system, but there cannot be poor administration for which nobody is responsible. The remedy is understood, and can

be applied at will by the people of the city. It was contended by the commission appointed by Gov. Tilden to report upon the government of cities, "That there should reside, in the hands of the governor, for safety's sake, the power to remove a mayor." There can be no serious objection to this reserved power of removal. Practically it would be resorted to very infrequent if at all. But by all means let it exist, if it will satisfy us to make a strong executive. Until some such system is had, of concentrating in the executive head of the city, power and responsibility equal to the demands of the situation, it is useless to expect a truly efficient city government. The second condition of efficient administration is that executive work should be committed to one man. It seems strange that among so practical a people as we are, it should be necessary to emphasize this plain truth. Yet there is scarcely a city which does not violate, in its city government, the dictates of this maxim, which sums up the whole testimony of human experience. The old Romans, when they had five aqueducts, placed every one of them under the charge and supervision of a single man. Our forefathers placed each of the executive departments of the general government in the care of a single officer. Who supposes, for a moment, that the post office system of England for instance, could have been developed to its present condition, except along the line of administration of executive work by single individuals? All the great interests affected by the Finance Department are committed without hesitation by civilized nations to a single Finance Minister. Yet when it comes to the cities, and the small concerns, comparatively, which are affected by them, we appear to be afraid to lodge the administration of the department of city works, or the fire department, or the police department in single heads. If human experience teaches anything with greater emphasis than executive work to be well done should be committed to one man, it teaches that the feeblest of all forms of administration is by committee. Yet, in our city—in most cities, the committees of the common council are practically the executive arm of the city government, the nominal executive having but little inherent power. Our city, therefore, must not expect to attain to a high degree of efficient administration until they will commit to a single head each of the executive departments of the city. The principle of personal responsibility on the part of one man to his superior must permeate the departments from top to bottom before it becomes reasonable to expect any high standard of efficiency. There may, indeed, be failure of executive work under these conditions if the head of a department be in fact a poor executive, but the mayor ought to be given the right not only to practically appoint his heads of department, but a similar power to cause their removal, so that when experience has demonstrated any appointment to have been a mistake, he can remedy it, and so properly

be held responsible at every moment for efficient administration in all parts of the city government.

The next element in efficient administration on the part of a city government is that it should work together. The police department, for example, touches in its daily duties the department of city works, the health department, the fire department, and the building department. The ordinances affecting all these departments depend for their enforcement upon the efficiency and co-operation of the police. The failure to co-operate with one another, so frequently found in the executive heads of departments springs in the main from the absence of any tie compelling them to realize a common responsibility. They are, indeed, officers of the same city, but that is all. His department is his business, and nobody else's. If they are nominated by the mayor and confirmed by the council, such appointments usually involve the feeling that they represent this or that personal interest. The idea of a common responsibility to work together for the public interest never presents itself under such conditions. It happens, therefore, that city governments often are loose ends, very much as the planets would be if the law of gravitation were suspended. Collisions in the heavens would not be more certain in the presence of such a suspension of the law of gravity, than conflicts between departments are certain in a city government which is held to no common responsibility. This element of responsibility to a common head can only be effectively obtained through the appointment of all such officials by the mayor of the city. This relation gives to a city government precisely the element which is needed—a responsibility to a common head who is himself responsible to the people of the city. A government so ordered, as compared with a government in which the heads of departments feel each one independent of all the others, would present precisely such a result as that which so frequently is seen upon the football field, where a fifteen which is in the habit of playing together defeats a fifteen made up of better individual players who have not been in the habit of playing together.

The same conditions which result in the highest degree of efficiency happily result also in the greatest measure of popular control. It would be impossible to get the judgement of the people at the same election upon all laws of the legislature. In the same way, it is impossible for the people of a city to discriminate intelligently as to many officials at a single election. To tell the people that they must elect one officer this year and another officer next year, and still another officer a third year before they can get control of even a single department of the city government, is to enter upon an task which is hopeless from the beginning. To tell the people that they must choose a good mayor, because the

mayor will determine the character of the city government in all its parts, is to make a proposition which is easily understood and easily acted upon. When the whole character of the city government is at issue, the newest citizen can be made to appreciate its importance; and when the duty devolving upon him is simply to make choice between two names or three, he is entirely competent to discharge that duty intelligently. As a consequence, a city government which is organized upon the line of direct responsibility of all its parts to the mayor, and through him to the people, is precisely that form of government over which the people of the city can exercise the most complete control. The requisites for efficient administration and popular control, therefore, go hand in hand.

HONESTY.

A system of city government, no matter how good, does not purify human nature, and care must be taken to keep comparatively clear of the "ward politician," the "machine." Eternal vigilance is the price of good government in any city under any form of municipal administration. Halifax so far has been exceptionally fortunate in having officials of the strictest probity.

The honesty of a city government depends upon the character of the men of which it is composed. These men must be not simply honest in the negative sense that they will not be dishonest, but they must be aggressively honest in the sense that they will not wink at dishonesty in others. They must also be men of strong parts, capable of resisting immense pressure from outside. "Wheresoever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together," and so long as our cities are making large disbursements, not only for current work but for permanent improvements, it is certain the city officials will be surrounded by men who seek to profit at the expense of the city. Experience and common prudence demonstrate the importance of publicity and clearly defined methods as to all official acts involving the use or appropriation of money, but back of all such safeguards must lie the sense of personal responsibility on the part of the official. Happily the same system which leads to the greatest efficiency and the greatest measure of popular control gives also the greatest security in the direction of honesty. When responsibility is personal and cannot be shared with or put off upon others, an official is compelled to watch his steps with far more care than when all action depends upon the result of so many officials that no single one is responsible. Again, when responsibility is personal, the praise for well-doing is personal, as well as the fear of punishment. Sometimes it would seem as if too little account were made of the better side of human nature in our attitude toward all public officials. The inspiration to the best work surely is found,

on the part of officials as well as on the part of private citizens, in the recognition by others of work that deserves recognition. Such recognition it is impossible to expect when responsibility and power are both divided and shared.

ECONOMY WITHOUT PARSIMONY.

It is reasonable and a wise precaution that the power of purse should not be given to the executive department, which, however, necessarily must administer and largely control expenditures. The appropriations for each department are placed upon the books of the proper officer to the credit of that department, and all *current expenditures* on account of salaries and the like are made without further action by the council. Special items, like an increase of the police force, or the construction of a building, must be voted by the council, even though the sum has been placed in the estimates specifically for that purpose. In other words, the mayor, while he is armed with complete powers of administration, does not control the purse strings, either as to determining the amount of money to be under his control, nor as to the use of the money, except in current ways, after it has been appropriated. Our present dependency on the legislature to borrow money is a wise provision. An appeal to the legislature for authority to borrow involves publicity. It takes time to obtain it, and publicity and time are all that is needed to prevent the passage of measures which are generally felt to be dangerous or bad. Publicity and time, on the other hand, tell in favor of measures which carry their own argument with them, or which are capable of being sustained by argument. The experience of cities in dealing with legislatures has demonstrated, however, the importance of insisting upon the following points: First, that the legislature shall not pass mandatory laws compelling a city to spend money which it may not wish to spend. All such laws should convey simply the authority to borrow or to spend, and the responsibility of acting under that authority should be lodged in the proper city authorities, so that the people of the city may hold their own officers responsible for action under the law. Experience has further taught the importance of this point, that when special work is to be undertaken by a city, work for which its ordinary organization is not well adapted, so that it becomes necessary to create new agencies for the purpose, the selection of the man or men to whom such special work is committed should be lodged with the city authorities, subject to the same conditions of constant responsibility as are the usual administrative departments. A commission named by the legislature is a Provincial body, and is responsible to no one except the legislature of the province. Not even the Governor-in-Council can call it to account. Commissioners named by the city, on the other hand, even though they be named

for a special purpose, may be made responsible to the mayor, and through him to the community whose funds they are handling. In general it may be said that the constitution of the common council of a city is the great unsolved problem of to-day. It seems clear that, whatever else is done, the power of interference by the legislative body with the executive, in any way, should be reduced to a minimum.

FORESIGHT AND CIVIC COURAGE.

It seems probable that the form of organization which has been suggested in this paper, that is, a city government in which the mayor is the real head rather than the nominal head only, will tend to secure these good qualities more generally than they have appeared in connection with city governments in the past. Under such an organization the mayor feels the inspiration of the great city behind him. He occupies a position where, for the moment, he embodies the aspirations and hopes of the community as such. It is natural for one so placed to look forward, as well as to consider matters of current administrations. The powers which are entrusted to the mayor in such a case invite the service of the best men in the city. It is worth while for any citizen to be mayor of a city, with such powers and opportunities. The system, therefore, tends in the right direction; but after all, the main hope lies in the public spirit of the people themselves. They must have an intelligent pride and interest in the future of their city, so as to demand for it from their officials not only good current care, but also wise provision for the future. This is the foundation upon which all hope of better city government must ultimately rest. The voters of a city must be kept informed as to its needs—In this respect our newspapers have been sadly wanting. It will be noticed with regret, by those able to judge, how very few civic issues are stated faithfully by our newspapers, viz, where the truth the whole truth and nothing but the truth is plainly told.—That a large public spirit may be encouraged three things are essential. First, that citizens shall believe the city government is easily within their control. Second, that the voice of the rate payer shall be fully and intelligently declared at elections. Third, that their natural pride in their city shall be fostered by every means which can develop in a population civic courage and a high ideal for their city. So long as the people feel that the officers whom they elect have little power to do harm, even if they can accomplish little good, elections necessarily tend to become purely and simply strifes for office. Let them feel that vital consequences to the city are at stake in the issue, and the citizens will become influential in their demand for the choice of good men, precisely in proportion to the seriousness of the results which they believe to be involved.